

Robert K. Phelps  
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Manassas, VA 20112  
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Dear Sirs;

I did not learn about the hearings on the HOT lanes last night until it was too late to come to the meeting and register to testify. If I had a suspicious mind, I would say that holding only one hearing on this important issue is an attempt to sneak through approval for the HOT lanes while giving only lip service to the principle of public comment.

Since the private firms are willing to finance the HOT lanes, their claims must be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism. Otherwise you may be opening another can of worms like the GREENWAY project. The business firms are sure to have a way to stick the taxpayers, so the public winds up paying for an expensive mistake.

Not enough information is given on how the toll payments will be collected. Also, information is lacking on how to identify the drivers who have paid the toll, and the drivers who are using the HOV/HOT lanes illegally.

Recently, when the Virginia state police tried to enforce the HOV restrictions on I-95, This resulted in a miles-long backup. The press roasted the police officers, instead of putting the blame on the large number drivers using the HOV lanes illegally.

These scofflaws know the probability of getting caught in the HOV lanes illegally is very low. Therefore the cost of the ticket becomes just another commuting expense. I feel these tickets should carry serious penalty points. If a motorist knows that using the HOV lanes illegally will result in losing the driving license, the abuse of the HOV lanes seems less attractive.

I feel the state police need to begin a regular HOV enforcement program of several days at a time. The sporadic hit-and-miss enforcement program does not get the job done.

True, there will be massive backups. However when the scofflaws learn the enforcement program will last a week or more, they will start using the outside lanes again.

The HOV programs should continue as-is for now. Strict enforcement, plus the high gas prices will combine to encourage more drivers to consider forming carpools and vanpools.

Sincerely,

**Signature on file at VDOT**